

*Ministry of
Human Resources*

**SERVICE PLAN
2004/05 – 2006/07**



National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data

British Columbia. Ministry of Human Resources.

Service Plan. — 2002/2003/2004/2005 —

Annual.

Also available on the Internet.

Continues: British Columbia. Ministry of Social Development and
Economic Security. Performance plan.

ISSN 1705-4346 = Service plan — British Columbia.
Ministry of Human Resources

1. British Columbia. Ministry of Human Resources —
Periodicals. 2. Public Welfare — British Columbia —
Periodicals. 3. Social Service — British Columbia —
Periodicals. I. Title. II. Title: Ministry of Human Resources
service plan.

HV109.B7B74

353.5'09711'05

C2003-960029-7

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Ministry of Human Resources
visit our Web site at
www.gov.bc.ca/mhr/

Published by the Ministry of Human Resources

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January 26, 2004

Honourable Stan Hagen
Minister of Human Resources

Dear Colleague:

Since June 2001, our government has been working to implement our *New Era* vision to revitalize the economy, restore sound fiscal management, and put patients and students first.

Our *New Era* platform contained 201 specific commitments that our government would undertake on behalf of British Columbians. These included a commitment to "establish service plans that include measurable performance standards and targets for all programs that are annually audited and published, for all taxpayers to see."

On June 25, 2001, I sent your predecessor a letter of instruction setting out the key priorities for your Ministry, including a list of the *New Era* commitments assigned to your Ministry. These commitments were also included in the Government Strategic Plan and Ministry Service Plans that were tabled in the Legislature in February 2002, covering fiscal years 2002/03 through 2004/05.

The Service Plan you are tabling today represents the final year of the first three-year plans. And it shows that we have made significant progress toward honouring our commitments. Accomplishments in your Ministry over the past two-and-a-half years include:

- Enacted comprehensive legislation to refocus the income assistance program on achieving long-term employment and self-sufficiency for those who are able to work.
- Reduced total income assistance caseload.
- Committed over \$300 million in training/employment programs with the result that more than 23,000 income assistance clients have been placed in jobs through government job placement programs.

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In the coming year, the province will continue work on a number of priorities to honour the commitments that we have made. These are detailed in your Ministry Service Plan, and include:

- Continue to streamline regional service delivery to recipients of income assistance.
- Respond to the changing profile of British Columbia Employment & Assistance clients through employment planning and programming that support their move to sustainable development.
- Assist persons with disabilities to maximize their independence through income assistance, employment and volunteer programs.

It is important to note that all of the province's achievements to date, and our priorities for the year ahead, will be accomplished while balancing the budget in 2004/05, and having significantly increased funding for health care and education.

Clearly, we will do more if we can, as new resources are available, to build on the funding priorities detailed in this Service Plan - in a way that is consistent with our balanced budget commitment.

As our measures to revitalize the economy continue to create new jobs, growth and investment, this will allow us to continue strengthening public services for the benefit of British Columbians. Opportunities like the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will showcase British Columbia to the world and generate economic benefits all across our province. Future service plans will further demonstrate those benefits.

I know that you will continue to build on the progress your Ministry has made. Let me conclude by thanking you for your commitment to serving the best interests of all British Columbians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gordon Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gordon" and last name "Campbell" clearly distinguishable.

Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier



Ministry of Human Resources



I am pleased to submit the Ministry of Human Resources Annual Service Plan for 2004/05–2006/07. This plan outlines the ministry's approach to providing assistance to those most in need while supporting clients who are able to work to achieve sustainable employment.

Through BC Employment and Assistance the ministry has achieved significant results during the 2003/04 fiscal year. Since April 2002 when the first ministry service plan took effect, through December 2003, the number of people receiving income assistance in British Columbia declined by approximately 29 per cent (a reduction of 68,535 clients) and

the number of children in income assistance families declined by approximately 38 per cent, a reduction of 28,371. This trend is encouraging because research shows that sustainable employment improves the lives and well-being of individuals and families.

During the same period, April 2002 through December 2003, the number of persons with disabilities receiving assistance from the ministry increased by 11 per cent. New initiatives for persons with disabilities, including an increase in the earnings exemption from \$300 to \$400 per month, a \$20 million endowment fund, and new employment services under the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities, encourage employment and reduce barriers. These initiatives are part of the ministry's Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, introduced in April 2002. The strategy supports persons with disabilities to engage in employment or volunteering to the greatest degree possible.

Under the *Employment and Assistance Act*, clients who are expected to work require an active employment plan as a condition of eligibility for income assistance. On-going eligibility for assistance is dependent upon compliance with the terms and conditions of the employment plan. While these clients have a personal responsibility to pursue employment, the employment plan provides clients with employment supports and/or programs they may need to achieve independence at the earliest opportunity.

Under the time limit policy employable clients who do not meet any of the 25 exemption criteria are limited to a cumulative two years of assistance out of every five. The 25 exemption criteria are designed to ensure that no one who is unable to work or who is actively looking for work will lose assistance. These include persons with disabilities, pregnant women, single parents with young children, people in a special care facility or people with an alcohol or drug problem.

The time limit policy is the first of its kind in Canada. A total of 339 employable clients who have been receiving assistance for more than two years may become ineligible over the coming year, or receive a rate reduction, as a result of non-compliance with their employment plan.

This policy ensures that clients who are unable to work or looking for work are protected, while also ensuring that employable individuals are not able to repeatedly cycle on and off assistance for longer than a cumulative two years out of five.

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal has been in operation for over a year as an independent and streamlined appeal body, receiving over 1,100 appeals in its first year.

These accomplishments position the ministry to achieve its mission and meet government's priorities and *New Era* commitments. In the next three years, the ministry will continue to emphasize self-reliance and personal responsibility, reducing long-term dependance on income assistance for those who are able to work. Regional service delivery to income assistance recipients will be further streamlined and responsive employment planning and programming will continue to evolve to support the changing profile of clients in their efforts to become self-reliant through sustainable employment. The ministry will further assist persons with disabilities to maximize their independence.

I am confident that through the ongoing commitment of staff the ministry will continue to meet its goals and objectives, supporting the government's strategic actions for a vibrant provincial economy and a supportive social fabric.

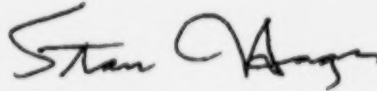


Honourable Stan Hagen
Minister of Human Resources

February 4, 2004

Accountability Statement

The 2004/05 – 2006/07 Ministry of Human Resources Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of January 30, 2004, have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Stan Hagen
Minister of Human Resources

February 4, 2004

Ministry Overview

The mission of the Ministry of Human Resources is to provide services that move people toward sustainable employment and assist individuals and families in need.

The ministry's services are provided under the BC Employment and Assistance program (BCEA), which emphasizes self-reliance and personal responsibility, and reduces long-term dependence on income assistance of those who are able to work.

BCEA is guided by two pieces of legislation, the *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act*. Both Acts came into force in September 2002. Through the BCEA program the ministry provides employment and pre-employment programs and services to clients to assist them in finding and sustaining employment, thereby achieving independence and self-reliance. Programs and services are developed and provided to clients based on their ability and readiness to work.

BCEA actively encourages self-reliance through employment, an approach that benefits families and individuals over the long-term. The ministry is working to break the dependency cycle, which means both ending the generational cycle — improving the prospects of children by supporting the efforts of their parents to find sustainable employment — and ending the 'cycle-on, cycle-off' pattern that many clients have experienced.

BCEA applicants undertake a three-week self-directed work search before they apply for assistance. At the same time, people who contact a ministry office with an urgent need for food, shelter, or medical attention may apply immediately.

The ministry provides services to the following client groups: clients receiving temporary assistance, clients with persistent multiple barriers to employment, persons with disabilities, and people in need of supplementary assistance.

All temporary assistance clients have employment-related obligations, except for those who are excused from seeking work (e.g., parents of a young child, clients with temporary illness or injury requiring medical treatment). Ministry employment programs support this client group as they move toward self-reliance.

Clients who are able to work are assisted to find jobs through employment plans. These plans are the foundation for ongoing dialogue and planning between ministry staff and clients. Employment plans outline the ministry's expectations of clients regarding their job search activities, and provide a clear list of activities clients will undertake that will assist them in finding work. This process provides clients with access to the tools and supports they require to find a job and become independent of income assistance.

Clients with persistent multiple barriers to employment may need significant support in overcoming those barriers before they are able to participate in the job market. The ministry provides these clients with services aimed at increasing their self-reliance by developing life skills and pre-employment skills.

The Ministry offers assistance to low-income persons with disabilities. For People with Disabilities who wish to work the Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD), announced in April 2002, is an overarching, integrated approach to employment. This strategy provides integrated assessment, pre-employment services, employment planning, job training, and employment services and supports to enable persons with disabilities to gain or enhance employment to the greatest degree possible.

Through its BCEA program the ministry also provides a range of supplementary medical and social services. These services include health assistance, dental care, emergency social services, bus passes, emergency shelters, travel assistance and user fees for continuing care and alcohol and drug facilities.

BCEA clients have the right to request a review of ministry decisions. Clients who are dissatisfied with decisions made at the office level may ask for a request for reconsideration. If clients remain unsatisfied with a reconsideration decision, they may appeal to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal office, an independent appeal body.

All of these programs and services support the ministry's mission to assist people into sustainable employment and provide income assistance to those in need. The ministry's progress in delivering this mission and its plan for the next three years is detailed in the following pages.

Resource Summary

Core Businesses	2003/04 Restated Estimates ¹	2004/05 Estimates	2005/06 Plan	2006/07 Plan
Operating Expense (\$000)				
Employment Programs	110,108	71,475	71,475	71,475
Temporary Assistance	461,652	382,176	373,674	362,963
Disability Assistance	433,950	476,358	522,198	529,658
Supplementary Assistance	196,617	165,630	173,906	177,186
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	2,417	2,467	2,467	2,467
Executive and Support Services	213,548	203,319	203,319	203,319
Total	1,418,292	1,301,425	1,347,039	1,347,068
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)				
Total	2,310	1,986	1,986	1,986
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	35	35	35	35
Executive and Support Services	15,293	21,512	11,185	10,670
Total	15,328	21,547	11,220	10,705

¹ These amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with the presentation of the 2004/05 Estimates. Schedule A, Consolidated Revenue Fund Expense, FTE and Capital Expenditure Reconciliations — 2003/04, of the Estimates presents a detailed reconciliation.

Core Business Areas

The ministry's major services are provided under the BC Employment and Assistance program (BCEA), which emphasizes self-reliance and personal responsibility, and reduces long-term dependence on income assistance of those who are able to work. Clients with persistent multiple barriers to employment may need significant support in overcoming those barriers before they are able to participate in the job market, and the ministry provides programs to support them in accomplishing that goal.

BCEA offers income assistance and an array of programs designed to assist those persons with disabilities to become involved in their communities. The ministry also provides supplementary services.

The ministry delivers BCEA programs and services through six core business areas, each of which is directly tied to the ministry's vision, mission and goals:

Core Business: *Employment Programs.*

Employment programs are available to assist clients to find and sustain employment. Individualized employment plans that are signed by clients may include directed job search, and referral to job placement programs and specific training for employment. Specialized programs that support persons with disabilities are included within this core business area.

Core Business: *Temporary Assistance.*

Temporary assistance is available to clients who are capable of financial independence through employment, or who are unable to seek work because of a short-term condition, as described in the *Employment and Assistance Act*. Persons with persistent multiple barriers to employment are included in this group.

Core Business: *Disability Assistance.*

Disability assistance is available to eligible persons with disabilities who are not expected to gain complete financial independence through employment, including clients with disabilities who are seeking work.

Core Business: *Supplementary Assistance.*

Supplementary assistance is available to eligible people, providing health and other supports such as health services for persons with disabilities, emergency shelters, bus passes, and user fees for continuing care and for alcohol and drug facilities.

Core Business: *Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.*

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal provides clients with timely decisions through a single-level, regionally based appeal system that is available for individuals who wish to appeal decisions of the ministry. The tribunal acts independently of the ministry.

Core Business: *Executive and Support Services.*

Executive and support services provide salaries, benefits, allowances and operating expenses of the minister's office, ministry corporate services and program management.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

To achieve its mandate of assisting people to move into sustainable employment and to provide assistance to those most in need, the ministry has developed five goals with supporting objectives and strategies. These goals demonstrate an approach that is comprehensive and multi-faceted.

Goal 1: *Clients who are able to work become self-reliant through employment.*

Objective 1: *Clients actively seek work as a condition of eligibility.*

2: *Clients find employment through job placement services.*

Strategies:

1. *Pre-applicants are required to undertake a three-week self-directed work search as a condition of eligibility.*
2. *Clients with employment-related obligations are required to complete and comply with employment plans as a condition of eligibility.*
3. *Clients access performance-based job placement services.*
4. *Clients access performance-based skills training services.*

Goal 2: *Clients increase their independence through income assistance, employment and volunteer programs.*

Objective 1: *Persons with disabilities who seek work find employment and persons with disabilities who seek to volunteer are placed in volunteer positions.*

2: *The self-reliance of persons with persistent multiple barriers to employment is improved.*

Strategies:

1. *Employment services and related supports are provided to persons with disabilities to enhance their self-reliance.*
2. *Clients with persistent multiple barriers to employment participate in programs that enhance their employability.*

Goal 3: *Clients receive supplementary assistance for health, transportation and emergency needs.*

Objective 1: *Ensure that only eligible individuals receive supplementary assistance.*

Strategy: *1. Respond to requests for supplementary assistance from eligible clients.*

Goal 4: *Individuals have access to a fair and timely appeal process.*

Objective 1: *Decisions are made on appeals and parties notified within the statutory timelines.*

Strategies: *1. The processing of appeals, including timeliness, is monitored and the rules of procedure are amended as required to maximize efficiency of the process.
2. Effective administrative support is provided to the hearing panels.*

Goal 5: *The ministry operates effectively, responsively and accountably.*

Objective 1: *Service delivery is streamlined and effective.*
2: *Reconsideration issues are efficiently resolved.*
3: *The ministry is a responsive and motivating employer.*

Strategies: *1. Technology-based options for ministry operations are implemented.
2. Performance improvement initiatives are implemented.
3. Risks that could affect the ministry's ability to fulfill its goals are identified, evaluated and managed.
4. Meet regulatory requirements for reconsideration.
5. Employee performance, planning and development reviews support ministry goals and objectives, and career endeavours.*

Goal 1: *Clients who are able to work become self-reliant through employment.*

Core Business Areas: *Employment Programs.*
Temporary Assistance.
Disability Assistance.

The Ministry of Human Resources supports income assistance clients in their efforts to achieve self-reliance and greater community participation. To fulfill this mandate, the ministry assists those clients who are able to work to find and maintain employment.

Clients who leave income assistance for jobs tend to have higher incomes, their children are less likely to receive income assistance as adults, and they attain higher levels of training and education. Children whose parents work are also more likely to complete high school and be actively involved in the labour market as adults.

Goal 1 Performance Measure	2001/02 Baseline	2002/03 Result	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
1.1 Percentage of B.C.'s population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations (NEW).	3.4%	1.7%	1.0%	0.9%	0.87%	0.84%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.			0.99%			

Increasing the number of clients who find employment is a critical aspect of the ministry's mission. Measure 1.1 was developed to track the ministry's success in this area. All temporary assistance clients have employment-related obligations, except for those who are excused from seeking work (e.g., parents of a young child, temporary illness or injury requiring medical treatment).

The percentage of British Columbia's population receiving income assistance who are able to work has been reduced since 2001/02. A lower percentage indicates that more people are leaving income assistance or do not require assistance.

While the measure is new, data was available to establish a 2001/02 baseline. Data for 2002/03 shows that the percentage declined and this positive trend continued during the first half of 2003/04.

Objective 1: *Clients actively seek work as a condition of eligibility.*

Strategies: 1. *Pre-applicants are required to undertake a three-week self-directed work search as a condition of eligibility.*
 2. *Clients with employment-related obligations are required to complete and comply with employment plans as a condition of eligibility.*

Objective Level Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
1.2 Percentage of clients with employment-related obligations who have an active employment plan (NEW).	N/A	85%	95%	100%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.	68%			

Employment plans are the foundation for ongoing dialogue and planning between ministry staff and clients. These plans outline the ministry's expectations of clients regarding their job search activities, and provide clients with a clear list of activities they will undertake that will assist them in finding work. This process ensures that clients have access to the tools and supports they require to find a job and become independent of income assistance.

Measure 1.2 is a new measure reflecting the importance of employment plans as a tool to assist clients in moving toward independence. A higher percentage for this measure indicates success in encouraging self-reliance and in assisting clients achieve independence. In 2003/04, a baseline will be established for this measure.

Objective 1: *Clients find employment through job placement services.*

Strategy: 1. *Clients access job placement services which are performance-based.*

Objective Level Measure	2002/03 Baseline	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
1.3 Percentage of Job Placement clients who remain independent of income assistance for at least six months.	83%	80%	80-90%	80-90%	80-90%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.		91%			

The ministry offers job placement services to support clients in finding and keeping employment. Research indicates that the likelihood of returning to income assistance significantly decreases for clients who maintain financial independence for at least six months.

The Job Placement program assists clients with supports such as resume preparation, employment and personal counseling, and job search assistance. The program is delivered through contracted service providers, whose payment is performance-based — determined by the number of clients in the program who achieve independence from income assistance.

Ministry statistics indicate that in 2002/03, 83 per cent of job placement participants were independent of income assistance after six months. As this program matures, the ministry is able to report information about clients who remain independent for longer periods. Results as of December 2003 indicate that approximately 85 per cent of job placement clients remain independent of income assistance after 12 months, and after six months, the results were approximately 91 per cent. The 80 to 90 per cent target range for measure 1.3 allows for fluctuations in local economies and for variations in the readiness of those clients referred to the program.

Goal 2: *Clients increase their independence through income assistance, employment and volunteer programs.*

Core Business Areas: *Employment Programs.*
Temporary Assistance.
Disability Assistance.

The ministry provides income assistance and a range of programs to clients as they work to increase their independence. The ministry recognizes that some clients require a combination of supports to enhance their independence and fulfil their potential. Clients who experience barriers to employment may benefit from services that support life-skill development or volunteer opportunities as they increase their employability. The ministry also funds employment programs specifically to support persons with disabilities to find sustainable employment or enhance their participation in the community.

Goal 2 Performance Measures	2001/02 Baseline	2002/03 Result	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
2.1 Percentage of British Columbia's population receiving income assistance.	6%	4.3%	4.8%	4.3%	3.7%	3.5%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.			3.9%			

Goal 2 Performance Measures	2001/02 Baseline	2002/03 Result	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
2.2 Percentage of total caseload receiving disability assistance.	29.6%	38.5%	40%	46%	48%	50%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.			44.8%			

Measure 2.1 shows the overall percentage of the provincial population that is receiving income assistance. This includes clients receiving temporary assistance, as well as those receiving disability assistance. A lower percentage indicates a decreasing proportion of the provincial population is dependent on income assistance. Results from 2001/02, 2002/03 and for the first half of 2003/04 show the percentage of the provincial population receiving income assistance is lower than had been expected. Targets for future years call for this percentage to continue dropping.

As the ministry succeeds in assisting clients to find and keep jobs, an increasing proportion of the caseload will be made up of people with disabilities. Some people with disabilities are unable to work and others may only be able to work part-time or for part of each year.

The ministry is currently working to gain greater understanding of the circumstances and needs of clients receiving disability assistance. At one time, ministry staff had relatively little contact with clients receiving disability assistance and little was known about some of the ministry's long-term clients. This is now changing. Progress has been made through the updating of the disability designation that took place during 2003, and the ministry will continue to improve its understanding of these clients and their needs.

Measure 2.2 tracks the percentage of the caseload that is made up of disability assistance cases. An increase in this measure is an indication that the ministry is focusing its resources on those most in need.

Results from 2001/02, 2002/03 and the first half of 2003/04 show a trend toward an increasing percentage of the caseload receiving disability assistance. Targets for coming years call for this positive trend to continue.

Objective 1: *Persons with disabilities who seek work find employment and persons with disabilities who seek to volunteer are placed in volunteer positions.*

Strategy: *1. Employment services and related supports are provided to persons with disabilities to enhance their self-reliance.*

Objective Level Measure	2002/03 Baseline	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
2.3 Percentage of persons receiving disability assistance who declare earnings from working or volunteering.	13.6%	14.5%	14.7%	15.0%	15.2%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.		12.3%			

As disability assistance clients enhance their independence, it is expected that more will volunteer. Others will work at some point during each year and declare earned income.

In April 2002, the ministry introduced the Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD). The strategy includes the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD), the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities and a strategic partnership with Human Resources Development Canada. All of these initiatives support persons with disabilities to engage in employment to the greatest degree possible; this may include full or part-time work, or volunteering. Successful programs should lead to increased earnings and volunteer activities for disability assistance clients.

The ministry also provides pre-employment services to these clients, assisted job search, job coaching, job placement, follow-up services, employment crisis services and assistance with starting their own businesses.

Volunteering is a valuable activity for many clients who are receiving disability assistance and are not able to fully support themselves through employment. Volunteer work may lead to employment, as it often provides valuable skills and experience. Volunteering is an opportunity for clients to contribute to their communities, thereby enhancing their participation.

This measure provides a conservative count of volunteer activity, as it only tracks those who receive earnings from volunteering. Results for 2002/03 and the first half of 2003/04 show an increase in the percentage of disability assistance clients who either had employment or volunteer income. There is a substantial amount of additional volunteer activity that the ministry is unable to measure.

Objective 1: *The self-reliance of persons with persistent multiple barriers to employment is improved.*

Strategy: 1. *Clients with persistent multiple barriers to employment participate in programs that enhance their employability.*

Objective Level Measure	2003/04	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
2.4 Percentage of persons with persistent multiple barriers who participate in a ministry program (NEW).	Establish baseline	—	—	—

Some ministry clients face significant barriers to achieving self-reliance through employment as a result of issues such as limited life-skills, minimal employment history, and literacy concerns. The ministry provides clients who face multiple barriers to employment with services aimed at increasing their self-reliance by developing life skills and by providing pre-employment opportunities. Increasing the level of self-reliance and community involvement of people with multiple barriers to employment contributes to the ministry's ability to achieve its mission.

Measure 2.4 is a new measure that tracks the percentage of persons with multiple barriers who are served by ministry programs. Involvement in ministry programs is simply a first step. The ministry is working to understand the kinds of barriers persons with persistent multiple barriers to employment face so that programs and services can more effectively address the issues. As programs and services for this client group are refined, more precise expected outcomes for clients will be developed. A higher percentage for this measure indicates that clients are increasing their community involvement and enhancing their self-reliance. A baseline for this measure will be established in 2004/05, and targets will follow. As the ministry recognizes this measure does not provide a complete picture of increased participation by persons with persistent multiple barriers to employment, the measure is considered interim and work on it will continue during the year.

Goal 3: *Clients receive supplementary assistance for health, transportation and emergency needs.*

Core Business Area: *Supplementary Assistance.*

The ministry provides a range of supplementary social services designed to meet emergency needs of clients and other British Columbians. These services include health assistance, emergency social services, bus passes, emergency shelters, travel assistance and user fees for continuing care and alcohol and drug facilities.

Objective 1: *Ensure that only eligible individuals receive supplementary assistance.*

Strategy: 1. Respond to requests for supplementary assistance from eligible clients.

Objective Level Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
3.1 Percentage of clients receiving a service, who are confirmed eligible for the service (NEW).	N/A	100%	100%	100%

Measure 3.1 is a new measure, tracking the percentage of clients receiving a supplementary assistance service. A higher percentage for this measure indicates that the ministry is successfully focusing its resources on assisting those who are most in need. A baseline will be established in 2003/04.

Goal 4: *Individuals have access to a fair and timely appeal process.*

Core Business Areas: *Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.*

The BC Employment and Assistance appeal system ensures unbiased, fair, timely and transparent decision-making for clients.

The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal operates under the authority of the *Employment and Assistance Act*, which was proclaimed on September 30, 2002. The tribunal operates independently of the ministry, administering its appeal process through a central office based in Victoria. The process begins after a client has gone through the reconsideration process at the employment and assistance regional level, and is still unsatisfied with the outcome. The tribunal is composed of a full-time tribunal chair and one or more part-time vice-chairs appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, approximately 200 regionally-based panel members appointed by the minister, and staff appointed under the *Public Service Act*.

Objective 1: *Decisions are made on appeals and parties notified within the statutory timelines.*

Strategies: 1. *The processing of appeals, including timeliness, is monitored and the rules of procedure are amended as required to maximize efficiency of the process.*

2. *Effective administrative support is provided to the hearing panels.*

Goal 4 Performance Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
4.1 Percentage of appeals processed from initial intake to final decisions within statutory timelines.	100%	100%	100%	100%

Objective Level Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
4.2 Percentage of appeals heard within the 15 business day statutory time limit.	100%	100%	100%	100%

The tribunal is required by statute and regulation to process appeals according to various strict timelines. Measure 4.1 tracks the tribunal's success in meeting these timelines. A higher percentage indicates success in meeting all timelines and delivering timely decisions. The tribunal achieved 100 per cent of appeals within the statutory timelines during the second half of 2002/03. The target for future years has been set at 100 per cent of appeals decided within the statutory timelines.

Measure 4.2 tracks the percentage of appeals heard within the 15-day statutory time limit as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulations and the Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Regulations. Future year targets for this measure are also set at 100 per cent, reflecting the ministry's commitment to ensuring fair and timely access to the decision-making process.

Goal 5: *The ministry operates effectively, responsively and accountably.*

Core Business Areas: *Executive and Support Services.*

In order for the ministry to fulfill its goals, it operates effectively, responsibly and accountably. This ensures quality service to clients and efficient use of tax dollars.

Objective 1: *Service delivery is streamlined and effective.*

- Strategies:**
1. *Technology-based options for ministry operations are implemented.*
 2. *Performance improvement initiatives are implemented.*
 3. *Risks that could affect the ministry's ability to fulfil its goals are identified, evaluated and managed.*

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Objective Level Measure	2002/03 Baseline	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
5.1 Percentage of clients using electronic fund transfers (NEW).	38.7%	42%	45%	50%	55%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.		42.7%			

Electronic fund transfers are an efficient means of providing income assistance to clients. They reduce costs, ensure payments are delivered through a verified process, and offer numerous advantages over the issuance of paper cheques, to both clients and the ministry.

Measure 5.1 is a new measure, and data is available from 2002/03 to establish a baseline. A higher percentage of clients using electronic fund transfers indicate that the ministry is successfully using technology-based options to provide streamlined and effective service.

Objective Level Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
5.2 Comprehensive strategic risk profile completed (NEW).	N/A	100%	100%	100%

The ministry is implementing enterprise-wide risk management by identifying and then assessing service plan risks at a process and operational level. The assessment will include the likelihood and effectiveness of controls in managing these risks, and a strategic risk profile will be developed. Measure 5.2 is a new measure that indicates success in identifying, assessing and profiling strategic risks facing the ministry. The target for future years is to complete risk profiles for all identified strategic risks.

Objective 1: *Reconsideration issues are efficiently resolved.*

Strategy: 1. *Meet regulatory requirements for reconsideration.*

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Objective Level Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
5.3 Percentage of reconsideration decisions that are made within ten business days (NEW).	N/A	86%	87%	88%
2003/04 results as of Dec./2003.	84.7%			

Clients have the right to request ministry decisions be reconsidered. This is an internal ministry process — a 'second look' — that is separate from the external appeal process. For the purposes of the measure, the ten business days begin when the client returns a signed Request for Reconsideration to the Employment and Assistance Office or to the regional office. The Regional Reconsideration Adjudicator reviews the information, and makes a new decision. If unsatisfied with this decision, a client may appeal to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal office.

Measure 5.3 is a new measure, reflecting changes to ministry procedures and the introduction of the reconsideration process. A higher percentage for this measure indicates the ministry is doing a better job of meeting regulatory requirements and of providing timely and efficient service to clients. A baseline will be established in 2003/04 and targets for subsequent years call for a steady increase in this measure.

Objective 1: *The ministry is a responsive and motivating employer.*

Strategy: 1. *Employee performance, planning and development reviews support ministry goals and objectives, and career endeavours.*

Objective Level Measure	2003/04 Baseline	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
5.4 Percentage of employees with a performance and development plan.	50%	75%	95%	95%
5.5 Percentage of employees with a personal learning plan (NEW).	Establish baseline	75%	95%	95%

Performance and development plans and personal learning plans are tools designed to enhance employee satisfaction and performance. A performance and development plan sets out the commitments of the employee and the employer to ensure success on the job and fulfillment of career plans. A personal learning plan sets out the employee's goals

for development, and the efforts that will be made by the employee and the employer to support success.

Measure 5.4 tracks the percentage of ministry employees with a performance and development plan, while measure 5.5 tracks the percentage with a personal learning plan. A higher percentage for these measures indicates that the ministry is successfully supporting employee success and career development, thereby making the ministry a more effective organization and fulfilling its responsibility to be a responsive and motivating employer.

Appendix 1. Strategic Context

Ministry Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The Ministry of Human Resources envisions a province in which those British Columbians in need are assisted to achieve their social and economic potential.

Mission

The Ministry of Human Resources provides services that move people toward sustainable employment and assist individuals and families in need.

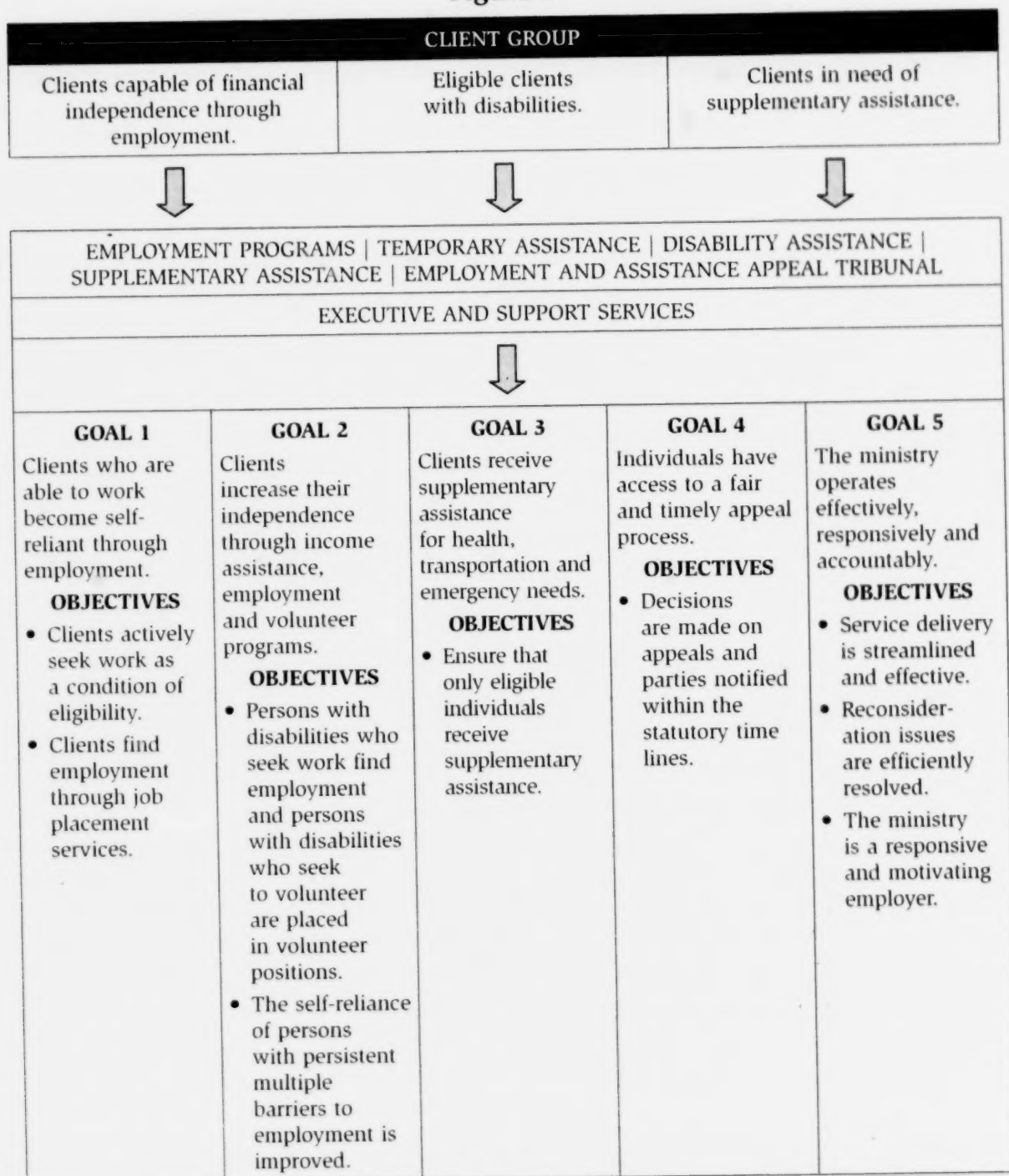
Values

- Personal responsibility.
- Active participation.
- Innovative partnerships.
- Citizen confidence.
- Fairness and transparency.
- Clear outcomes.
- Accountability for results.

Ministry Clients, Programs, Goals and Objectives

The Ministry of Human Resources provides income assistance and other supports to people in need. Emergency shelters and disaster response programs are included among the programs and services offered by the ministry. Figure 1, on the following page, provides a schematic that describes the ministry's clients, its core business areas and the goals and objectives detailed in this service plan.

Figure 1



Planning Context

The ministry is affected by numerous outside trends and factors that have an impact on its ability to fulfil its mission. Some of these are summarized as follows:

External challenges and opportunities

Economic, population and labour market trends are key variables affecting the income assistance caseload. Generally speaking, economic and employment growth increase opportunities and reduce pressure on the caseload, while population growth, in-migration and unemployment increase pressure on the caseload. Small variations in these trends do not generally cause radical changes in caseload pressures.

The BC economy grew 1.7 per cent in 2003, according to BC's Independent Economic Forecast Council. The Council now expects growth in BC's economy to pick up to 2.9 per cent in 2004. Further information on the BC outlook including economic, population and labour market trends may be found in the *Budget and Three Year Fiscal Plan* released with the budget.

A number of internal factors also affect the ministry's ability to achieve its goals and objectives. The challenges and opportunities facing the ministry include the following:

- **Changing caseload** — The ministry continues to respond to the changing profile of BCEA clients through employment planning and programming that supports their move to sustainable employment.
- **Aboriginal people** — The Provincial Aboriginal Social-Economic Strategy brings together the social and economic activities of ministries to fulfill the *New Era* commitment to improve the well-being of Aboriginal people in British Columbia. The ministry is fulfilling this commitment by developing common strategies for the coordinated integration of initiatives for Aboriginal people in need of income assistance and employment programming.
- **Focus on clients with disabilities** — The ministry has a large group of clients with disabilities — people who have tremendous potential for participating in their communities. The ministry continues to assist persons with disabilities to maximize their independence through income assistance, employment and volunteer programs.
- **Best practices** — As an organization committed to functioning effectively, responsively and accountably, the ministry continues to develop and implement business models based on best practices for service delivery.
- **Cultural shift** — Over the past three years, the ministry underwent a significant cultural shift to support the implementation of BCEA. The culture has shifted from one of entitlement to one of personal responsibility, emphasizing self-reliance through employment. Under the *Employment and Assistance Act*, temporary assistance recipients are expected to look for and accept employment. The ministry actively works with clients

with employment-related obligations in developing an Employment Plan. Employment Plans are specific, individualized agreements that outline the activities clients will undertake to find employment, and the services the ministry will offer in order to assist them. In order to further support a system based upon personal responsibility, the ministry established time limits for those able to work. Time limits limit access to income assistance to a maximum of 24 of 60 months. This policy encourages clients to take advantage of all opportunities that lead to employment. If clients take advantage of opportunities, the ministry is confident that people will find work within the two-year time frame. Further, there are 24 different categories of exemptions to the time limit rule protecting people with disabilities, mental illness, drug and alcohol problems, pregnant women, parents with children under the age of three and numerous other barriers. These exemptions are there to ensure that those who truly need assistance, get assistance.

- **Staff training and tools** — The transition to BCEA required that the field and headquarters staff be trained and new tools be developed and implemented. Building on progress made in this area over the past two years, the ministry continues to upgrade staff skills and tools.
- **Technology-based services** — The ministry made progress in providing a series of web-based services to the public, making it easier for people to access information while protecting personal privacy. These services include the IA Eligibility and Child Care Estimators, and Orientation Sessions. The ministry provides services through telephone call-centres and automated telephone inquiry systems making services accessible, even in remote areas of the province. The ministry continues to explore other electronic service delivery options to expand the ways in which clients can access BCEA services and to continue to strengthen the ministry's efficiency in providing those services.
- **Project management approach** — Over the past three years, the ministry adopted a project management approach to designing, developing and implementing complex policy programs and legislative changes. Project teams across ministry divisions make use of the broad range of expertise available throughout the ministry and lead the implementation of new programs and policies. This approach will continue.
- **Accountability tools** — Accountability agreements were established for each region, and new Employee Performance and Development Plans were introduced to support an environment of professional development and ongoing learning. The ministry continues to develop in these areas.

Highlights of Strategic Shifts and Changes from the Previous Service Plan

The ministry continues to make progress in the overall directions outlined in the 2003/04 – 2005/06 Service Plan published last year. As changes occurred since last year, the ministry refined its core business areas, goals, objectives, and measures.

The ministry has maintained six core business areas in this year's service plan. The Continuous Assistance core business area was renamed Disability Assistance to focus on the provision of specialized programs and services for Persons with Disabilities.

Changes to goals

Goal 1: Clients who are able to work become self-reliant through employment.

Last year's equivalent

- BC Employment and Assistance clients achieve independence through sustained employment.
- BC Employment and Assistance services support self-reliance.

Reason for changes

- This goal was refined to sharpen the focus on self reliance through employment.

Goal 2: Clients increase their independence through income assistance, employment and volunteer programs.

Last year's equivalent

- BC Employment and Assistance services provide continuous assistance to those clients most in need.
- BC Employment and Assistance services support self-reliance.

Reason for changes

- This goal was refined to emphasize the ministry's combined focus on providing income assistance while also encouraging increased independence of all clients, including those with disabilities who are not able to become completely self-reliant through employment.

Goal 3: Clients receive supplementary assistance for health, transportation and emergency needs.

Last year's equivalent

- BC Employment and Assistance services provide supplementary assistance for eligible clients.

Reason for changes

- This goal was revised to more clearly convey the nature of the ministry's supplementary services.

Goal 4: Individuals have access to a fair and timely appeal process.

Last year's equivalent

- The ministry operates effectively, openly and accountably.

Reason for changes

- The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal contributed to the service plan by submitting a new goal, objectives, strategies and measures to be tracked.

Goal 5: The ministry operates effectively, responsively and accountably.

Last year's equivalent

- The ministry is a responsive and motivating employer.
- The ministry operates effectively, openly and accountably.

Reason for changes

- The goal relating to the ministry's internal functioning was redrafted to enhance the ministry's focus on effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability.

Changes to measures

In a continuing effort to ensure that the ministry's performance measures provide a concise and accurate picture of the ministry's success in fulfilling its goals and objectives, additional changes were made to several performance measures. The rationale for each performance measure is presented within the text of this plan's Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results section.

The following table shows how this year's measures have evolved from those in last year's service plan.

This year's measure	Last year's measure	Explanation
1.1 Per cent of B.C.'s population aged 19-64 receiving temporary assistance with employment-related obligations.	2.3 Per cent of British Columbia's population receiving temporary assistance.	Revised to exclude those who are temporarily excused from seeking work.
1.2 Per cent of clients with employment-related obligations who have an active employment plan.	—	New measure
1.3 Per cent of Job Placement clients who remain independent of income assistance for at least six months.	1.1	Unchanged
2.1 Per cent of British Columbia's population receiving income assistance.	2.2	Unchanged
2.2 Per cent of total caseload receiving disability assistance.	3.1 Per cent of total caseload receiving continuous assistance.	Revised to reflect focus on persons with disabilities.
2.3 Per cent of persons receiving disability assistance who declare earnings from working or volunteering.	1.3 Per cent of persons with disabilities with employment income. 3.2 Per cent of continuous assistance clients who work or volunteer.	Previous measures combined and revised to focus on persons with disabilities.
2.4 Per cent of persons with persistent multiple barriers who participate in a ministry program.	—	New measure
3.1 Per cent of clients receiving a service, confirmed eligible for the service.	—	New measure
4.1 Per cent of appeals processed from initial intake to final decisions within statutory timelines.	—	New measure

This year's measure	Last year's measure	Explanation
4.2 Per cent of appeals heard within the 15-day statutory time limit.	6.2 Per cent of appeal hearings commenced within 15 business days.	Minor wording change
5.1 Per cent of clients using electronic fund transfers.	—	New measure
5.2 Comprehensive strategic and process risk profiles developed and assessed.	—	New measure
5.3 Per cent of reconsideration decisions that are made within ten business days.	—	New measure
5.4 Per cent of employees with performance and development plans.	5.1	Unchanged
5.5 Per cent of employees with a personal learning plan.	—	New measure

The following table shows measures from last year's service plan that are not included in this plan.

Last year's measure	Explanation
1.4 Per cent of Training for Jobs clients who remain independent of income assistance for at least six months.	Job placement success is already measured through Job Placement Program.
2.1 Per cent of enquirers who contact BC Employment and Assistance offices and are diverted to employment.	Measure dropped due to difficulty in confirming reason why an enquirer does not return.
2.4 Per cent of the total caseload receiving temporary assistance.	Measure dropped because it is the corollary to this year's measure 2.2.
4.1 Number of bus passes available to eligible seniors and persons with disabilities.	Measure dropped because it measured outputs rather than outcomes.
6.1 Per cent of program and service contracts that are performance-based.	Measure dropped because all ministry program and service contracts are now performance-based.

Consistency with Government Strategic Plan

The 2004/05 – 2006/07 Ministry of Human Resources' Service Plan directly supports the government's strategic plan. The following table indicates concrete ways the ministry's strategies promote government's overall objectives:

Government Goal: *A strong and vibrant provincial economy.*

Government's Strategy: *Innovation and economic growth.*

Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Human Resources Strategies/Achievements
Expand partnerships with the federal government to promote growth and economic development in British Columbia.	The ministry works with the federal government to design and strengthen the delivery of federal labour market development programs to meet the needs of British Columbians.

Government's Strategy: *Management of government.*

Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Human Resources Strategies/Achievements
All ministries will meet their budget and service plan targets.	Ministry operating expenses in 2002/03 were \$1.6 billion, 170 million below the 2002/03 - 2004/05 Service Plan <i>Estimates</i> .
Promote and sustain a renewed professional public service.	The ministry is implementing a human resource plan that includes employee and leadership development, workplace capability, performance development and recognition.
Continue to streamline government's legislation and regulation.	By the end of 2002/03, the ministry had achieved 91 per cent of its deregulation target set for the government's first mandate.
Expand public access to government through e-government initiatives.	A series of web-based ministry services was made available to the public.

Government Goal: *A supportive social fabric.*

Government's Strategy: *Flexibility and choice.*

Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Human Resources Strategies/Achievements
Facilitate a community-based approach to ensure access to high-quality and cost-effective health, education and social services.	A new streamlined appeal system was introduced, with regionally based tribunals and timely decision.

Government's Strategy: *Access.*

Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Human Resources Strategies/Achievements
Ensure delivery of a consistent level and quality of education, health and social services throughout the province.	The ministry provides a consistent level of social services through five regions, with clients having both office and electronic access to ministry services.

Government's Strategy: *Results-oriented and evidence-based accountability.*

Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Human Resources Strategies/Achievements
Implement and manage performance-based accountability agreements for publicly funded agencies including health, education and social services.	The Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal provides an open and fair process that ensures ministry accountability for its decisions.

Government's Strategy: *Enhance individual and community capacity.*

Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Human Resources Strategies/Achievements
Promote the development of supports and services within aboriginal communities that address their unique social and economic conditions.	The ministry is working co-operatively with the federal government, and with other provincial ministries, to assist in providing, where possible, more efficient and streamlined social services to First Nations on and off reserve.
Provide supports and incentives to enhance local responsiveness to community and family needs.	The ministry's Emergency Social Services program provides individuals and families with short-term disaster assistance for food and shelter.
Provide skills training and employment programs to move employable BC Employment and Assistance clients into the labour market.	Employment programs are available to assist clients to find and sustain employment. Individualized employment plans facilitate discussion between clients and staff and outline activities clients with employment-related obligations will take to obtain employment. Activities may include directed job search, referral to job placement programs and specific training for employment.
Implement new employment programs and services that assist persons with disabilities to participate in employment and employment-related or voluntary activities as they are able.	The ministry implemented the Employment Program for Persons With Disabilities to assist persons with disabilities in building their work-related skills and in enhancing their involvement in volunteering or paid employment.

Government Goal: *Safe, healthy communities and a sustainable environment.*

Government's Strategy: *Community services and infrastructure.*

Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Human Resources Strategies/Achievements
Establish workable relationships with First Nations communities.	The federal government through Indian and Northern Affairs consults with the ministry and First Nations when designing income assistance for people living on reserve.

Appendix 2. Supplementary Performance Information

Glossary of Key Terms and Definitions

Caseload	Number of family units receiving temporary, disability or supplementary assistance.
Earned income	Any money or value received in exchange for work or the provision of a service (this includes stipends provided to clients for their participation in volunteer positions designed to build employment skills).
Employment-related Obligations	The ministry's expectation that a client will seek work, based upon individual ability.
Employment Plan	A document that initiates discussion between the client and the ministry and supports employment planning and successful client outcomes. This is a mandatory requirement for most clients with employment-related obligations.
Employment Programs	Programs established or funded under the <i>Employment and Assistance Act</i> and the <i>Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act</i> .
Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal	Agency that administers the appeal panel process. Its role begins when a Notice of Appeal is received from the appellant. At that point, the ministry operates at 'arms length' from the tribunal process, and is simply one of the parties to the appeal.
Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD)	A strategy designed to assist persons with disabilities to participate in employment-related activities to the best of their ability. The strategy recognizes that individuals experience disabilities in varying degrees, at different stages of their lives, and provides flexibility for those who want to volunteer or work full-time, part-time, or be self-employed.
Performance-based	A method of compensating agencies that deliver programs or services for the ministry under which remuneration is based on contract performance.
Persons with Disabilities	People meeting the criteria as set out in the <i>Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act</i> .

Persons with Persistent Multiple-Barriers to Employment	People with multiple barriers to employment are those who meet the criteria as set out in the Employment and Assistance Regulations. Examples of multiple barriers are literacy issues, limited education and work experience, long-term dependence on assistance and medical conditions that preclude or impeded employment.
No Employment-related Obligations	Clients not expected to become completely independent of assistance through employment have no employment-related obligations.
Pre-application	Prior to receiving income assistance, applicants must meet certain requirements, including a three-week employment search. Information about, and verification of, the work search is required.
Reconsideration	When a client disagrees with a ministry decision, the client may request a review of the decision. The process involves a written request, which is reviewed by the Regional Reconsideration Adjudicator the relevant regional office, who makes a new decision. If the client does not agree with that decision, the matter then proceeds to the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal.
Supplementary Assistance	Supplementary assistance addresses pressing needs, such as health assistance, emergency social services, bus passes and emergency shelters.
Temporary Assistance	Temporary assistance is provided to eligible persons who are expected to achieve independence through employment.

Appendix 3. Summary of Related Planning Processes

Ministry of Human Resources — Human Resource Management Plan

Goal 5: *The ministry is a responsive and motivating employer.*

Goal	Strategies
Employee and Leadership Development.	Leadership Development — Implement corporate and ministry leadership and management development programs to increase leadership capacity and management talent. Employee Development — Employee development linked to performance plans through training, e-Learning and new learning opportunities. Skill and Career Growth — Identify and support on-the-job training opportunities and career paths that encourage staff to grow skills and strengths. Competency profiles — Develop competency profiles for selected roles and align staffing, training and development plans, and processes. Ministry Learning Plan — Develop a three-year Ministry Learning Plan to support achievement of Human Resources Strategic Plan, employee and business goals.
Workplace Capability.	Healthy Workplace — Implement a healthy workplace program and expand existing health promotion initiatives. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) — Review OHS Program, conduct on-going occupational health and safety risk assessments and develop risk mitigation plans. Succession Planning — Develop Ministry Succession Plan and related staffing strategies to ensure future staffing requirements are met and continuity in key positions. Recruitment Initiatives — Identify difficult-to-recruit to positions, locations, and conduct targeted recruitment initiatives. Human Resources Transition — Facilitate the HR Transition Plan to support line managers, develop streamlined processes to increase capacity and flexibility.

Goal	Strategies
Performance Development and Recognition.	Employee Performance and Development Plan (EPDP) — Develop and implement a ministry-wide EPDP process that identifies, deploys and develops employee strengths. HR Accountability and Measurement — Define and implement an accountability and measurement framework to clarify for supervisors and managers. Recognition and Reward — Implement a performance-based individual and group recognition and reward program.

Supporting Strategies:

Change Management — Develop a change management strategy that supports leadership alignment, employee engagement and individual/team accountability

Communications — Provide ministry staff with timely HR communications

HR Information Management and Reporting — Collect and report on HR information

Information Resource Management Plan — Modernize and revitalize technology and business applications to improve overall service delivery and expand operational efficiencies. Develop ministry services that are: citizen-centered, timely, integrated, flexible, and customized to the individual's needs, while protecting the privacy of personal information.

